

13 February 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Mid-1955 Correspondence on Ballistic Missiles

30 June 1955. Letter to the President from Senator Anderson (Chairman, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy) and Senator Jackson (Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Applications) TOP SECRET

Para. 2. We fear that the USSR may achieve the first ICBM before the US does. Consider their long experience with ballistic missiles, possibility that they began top priority work to develop an ICBM in 1946, while we didn't until 1954. US Air Force believes our first ICBM will fly at end of 1958. If Soviets had assigned overriding priority to the effort and had begun it much earlier than we did, it is "entirely possible, and even probable, that they will achieve the ICBM well ahead of us."

Para. 4. Also indicates concern that Soviets may achieve a "monopoly" on a "so-called continental missile -- one with a range of 1500 to 2000 miles."

(The remainder of the letter deals with the need to increase US efforts to develop an operational ICBM capability.)

6 July 1955. Memorandum for the President from Secretary of Defense Wilson.

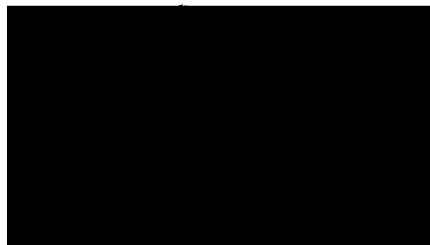
In response to 30 June letter, sets up a briefing on the (US) ICBM program for the NSC.

29 July 1955. Letter to the President from Senators Anderson and Jackson, transmitting a report of the Military Applications Subcommittee. TOP SECRET

Reports testimony that the Soviets may achieve a 1500-200⁰ mile missile "before we will, and that there is a 'fairly high probability of this occurring'."

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"We are deeply concerned over the evidence suggesting that in the development of a . . . 1500-2000 mile range [missile]. . . The Soviets may now be at a point which we ourselves will not reach until two years from now."



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